

## IN THE NEWS

### Three Palestinians slain in Gaza Strip

Israeli forces killed three Palestinians.

Two Gaza Strip gunmen were shot dead by troops Saturday as they tried to sneak into the Rafiah Yam settlement. In a separate incident, the army killed a Gaza youth who was part of a cell that tried to plant a mine near the boundary fence with Israel. In the West Bank, troops arrested three Hamas terrorists from Tulkarm, foiling an alleged attack they planned to carry out on a nearby settlement.

### Sharansky rips New Zealand gov't

Natan Sharansky blamed the New Zealand government for a surge of anti-Semitism in the country. Sharansky, Israel's minister for Diaspora affairs, made the charges in Yediot Achronot on Sunday, referring to an attack by vandals on a Jewish cemetery in Wellington last week.

It was the second such incident in the month following the jailing of two suspected Mossad agents in Auckland after they confessed to trying to obtain a New Zealand passport fraudulently. The case prompted New Zealand to suspend high-level relations with Israel.

"Being anti-Israel lends justification to anti-Semitism, and the connection between the two exists all over the world," Sharansky said.

Security has recently been increased at Jewish sites in New Zealand.

### Israel OKs N.Y. envoy

Israel's Cabinet approved Arye Mekel on Sunday to be the country's new consul general in New York.

Mekel has been Israel's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

He replaces Alon Pinkas, who was recently fired after receiving monthly extensions in his post for the past six months.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Synagogue reopens in Istanbul, but terrorist attack not forgotten

By YIGAL SCHLEIFER

**I**STANBUL (JTA) — The shattered front of Istanbul's Neve Shalom synagogue, some eight months after powerful suicide truck bombs struck it and another local synagogue, is still covered in a tall white tarp that flaps in the wind.

Beside the synagogue is a deep pit, all that's left of an adjacent building that had to be torn down because of the damage it sustained. Across the street from Neve Shalom, scattered among the small neighborhood shops that have reopened, are still-vacant buildings with windows shattered in the Nov. 15, 2003 blast.

Behind the tarp covering the synagogue's front, though, workers are busy pouring concrete and putting metal reinforcing rods in place for a new entrance. Inside Neve Shalom's main sanctuary, which suffered less damage from the bomb, workers on scaffolding are painting the synagogue's stately dome and installing new electric wiring.

It's a scene that, in many ways, symbolizes the current situation of Istanbul's Jewish community. While the damage and the scars of the November bombings are still easy to see, the community is busily working to move on.

At the same time, community leaders say, the bombings have led to new security realizations and requirements, which may make it very difficult — if not impossible — to return to life as it was before.

"We are in an ongoing trauma situation," says Lina Filiba, the Turkish Jewish community's executive vice president. "The whole community right now is a construction pit

— it's a continuation of the crisis that started Nov. 15."

She adds: "The change of lifestyle, the security consciousness, the restriction on the use of facilities is something that people are still getting used to."

The closing of Neve Shalom, the city's central synagogue and the spiritual heart of the community, has meant Istanbul's Jews have been without a place large enough to hold weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and other events. Community leaders say its reopening will be an important symbol of the community's rebuilding effort.

The synagogue was temporarily reopened recently, but the building's formal reopening is not slated until October.

But for Istanbul's Jews there is much else to get used to. Most of the city's 15 synagogues still remain closed, while the community re-evaluates the security situation at each building to determine what kind of changes are needed. Among the changes on the agenda are reinforcing walls to withstand bomb blasts and changing traffic patterns near Jewish institutions.

The city's largest Jewish social club, where classes were held and youth groups and a theater club would meet, has been permanently shut down while a new club is being built in a more secure location. The entrance to the old club was on a busy thoroughfare; the new one is in a quiet neighborhood behind a high cement wall.

"What's changed in our daily life is that in every Jewish institution there are now real security precautions. This is a transition

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### AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

## ■ Reopening a synagogue in Istanbul is seen as an important symbol

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period, until we take a look at the precautions and figure out if everyone is in a safe place," says Tilda Levi, editor of *Shalom*, Turkey's weekly Jewish newspaper.

Although there have not been any further attacks against Jewish targets since the November bombings — which also included strikes against the British Consulate and a British-owned bank several days later — there have been several events that have engendered deep unease in the Jewish community.

In March, two suicide bombers from a militant Turkish Islamist group attacked a masonic lodge on Istanbul's Asian side, killing two and injuring six.

Masons are frequently accused by Islamists and nationalists in Turkey of being a front for Jewish and Israeli interests, and, according to Turkish media reports, one of the bombers shouted "Death to the Israeli lodge" as he was being taken injured to the hospital.

In the subsequent investigation, it turned out that a gun the bombers had been carrying had been the one used in the unsolved murder of Yasef Yahya, a Jewish dentist who was found killed execution style in his office the previous August.

In a police re-creation of the murder, the suspects who had been arrested told investigators that they decided to kill Yahya after seeing his Jewish name on the sign outside his office.

In early May, meanwhile, Turkish police arrested a group of 16 men in con-

nection with an alleged plot to bomb the NATO summit that recently took place in Istanbul.

Although the plan was vague, the group — which police said had links to Al-Qaida — apparently had a more developed plan to bomb one of the synagogues in Bursa, a city near Istanbul that has a small Jewish community of 70 people.

For many members of the Turkish Jewish community, the combination of events and the emergence of home-grown Turkish militant Islamist groups that see Jews as legitimate targets has had a chilling effect.

"People don't want to go to synagogue. They are scared," says Bensi Elmas, a dentist whose office is down the street from that of the murdered Yahya.

"People think that an attack could happen again. But the community leaders say we should go, otherwise the terrorists will win."

Community members and leaders say their sense of discomfort has also been heightened by what they see as the increasingly vocal criticism of Israel in the country, criticism that they say is often turned toward them.

"When Israel does something against Muslims, you have protests here and then people here look at us and say, 'Look what you did,'" says Sabbatai Iyigor, a cantor at one of Istanbul's synagogues.

For example, a recent article in *The New Yorker* magazine that claimed that Israeli agents are training Iraqi Kurd commandos in the event that Iraq falls into chaos and the Kurdish north declares its autonomy, led to a flurry of criticism of Israel in the Turkish media.

Israel has denied the claims, but Turkey views any moves the Kurds make in Iraq with great suspicion and the possibility that Israel, an ally, was working with them was not well received.

Some of what was written, though, was pointedly directed at Turkey's Jewish community.

Writing in the liberal daily *Aksam*, columnist Sakir Suter said it was not only Israel, but also Turkish Jews, who had to disprove *The New Yorker's* claims. "We, personally, are waiting for a last chance

in order not to declare openly and publicly that the Jews are the 'enemy,'" Suter wrote.

Rifat Bali, a historian who writes about Turkey's Jewish community, says this kind of language used to be used only in the Islamist media and in extremist circles, but has now found its way into mainstream debate.

"The atmosphere is really poisoned right now. Anti-Israelism, anti-Semitism is part of daily life, daily rhetoric in the press, and nobody seems concerned

about it," Bali says.

Community officials say that they have recently begun to hold meetings with editors from Turkey's major newspapers, in an effort to help the journalists understand the Jewish community and to open up a line of communication.

But Filiba says the community does not feel compelled by the criticism against Israel to change its own position regarding the Jewish state.

"We are the Jewish community of Turkey. Full stop. We are citizens of Turkey," Filiba says.

"We don't live in Israel. We live in Turkey," she adds.

In the meantime, Filiba says the Turkish Jewish community is focusing on its rebuilding effort and struggling to raise the funds needed for that project.

She estimates the community will need several million dollars for the one-time cost of rebuilding and strengthening its institutions.

The ongoing security cost, already a large chunk of the community's annual budget, will at least double, Filiba says.

The community was struggling financially before the bombings, mostly because of the after-effects of the economic crisis that hit Turkey a few years ago. Filiba says the community has received some assistance from outside, but could use more help from international Jewish organizations.

"Rebuilding is a major, major project and if we don't rebuild our facilities I don't think the members of our community will feel safe to come to our facilities, and then you don't have community life," she says.



**Lina Filiba**

Turkish Jewish official

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# Veterans return for another Olympics shot

By E.B. SOLOMONT

NEW YORK (JTA) — Joe Jacobi's pain as he prepares for the Olympics is more emotional than physical.

The canoeist/kayaker, 34, told JTA by e-mail that as he prepares for the Olympics in Athens, he misses his 3-year-old daughter, Seu Jane — named for the Spanish village that hosted some of the rowing competitions in the 1992 Summer Games — who is at home with his wife in Tennessee.

The pursuit of an Olympic medal usually conjures up a youthful single-mindedness, but like Jacobi, who grew up in a Washington suburb, many of the 15 Jewish athletes competing for the U.S. team at the Athens Games are veteran athletes who competed in previous Olympics.

Jacobi, nicknamed the "paddling papa," won gold at the Olympics in 1992, the same year he was named USA Canoe/Kayak male athlete of the year.

Another veteran, swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg, a triple gold medal winner at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, will also compete in Athens, where the Games will get under way on Aug. 13.

Krayzelburg, a Jewish immigrant from Odessa — in what is now Ukraine — also has been an acknowledged Jewish role model, once telling reporters that "Being Jewish is part of me, it's part of my culture."

He got his first American swimming experience, and his first job, at a JCC in Los Angeles shortly after his family arrived here in 1988 from the Soviet Union.

After setting world records in the 100-meter and 200-meter backstroke at the 2000 Olympics, he participated in the Maccabiah in Israel.

Nearly 29, an age considered ancient in a sport mostly dominated by teenagers

and those in their early 20s, Krayzelburg made headlines in mid-July when he qualified for the American team by finishing the 100-meter backstroke in 54.06 seconds, behind world champion Aaron Perisol.

His teammate, 28-year-old Jason Lezak of Irvine, Calif., another Jewish swimmer, won the 100-meter freestyle after setting a new American record of 48.17 seconds in the semifinals.

"Based on what you hear in the general public, you'd think there wasn't much representation, but the list we have is very impressive," said Jed Margolis, executive director of Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel.

In certain sports, he added, Jews "are at the top of the world."

Take, for example, Sada and Emily Jacobson.

This dynamic duo of Jewish sisters from Atlanta may be Olympic neophytes, but they will enter the Olympic arena with high expectations.

Sada Jacobson, 21, is the top-ranked woman fencer in the world and in the U.S. and has said in press interviews that making the Olympic squad is honor enough.

Jacobson's teammates likely are honored to be competing alongside her, though: Not only is she the first American woman and second American fencer to reach the top of the world rankings, she is also a four-time world championship team member and a two-time NCAA saber champion.

Her younger sister, Emily, 17, is just a few lunges behind and the pair's domination of women's fencing has been compared to that of tennis' well-known sisters, Venus and Serena Williams.

Emily, one of two athletes to receive a 2002 Jules D. Major Award to Jewish High School Athletes of the Year, was ranked second in U.S. saber fencing in 2003 and was a 2003 Pan American Games bronze medalist.

The Games in Athens will also be the first for 28-year-old fencer Dan Kellner.

This six-time world championship team member from central New Jersey

finished second in the foil competition at the national championships in 1997, 1998 and 2000.

But in 2000, Kellner did not make the Olympic squad.

After a year hiatus, he came back and won a gold medal at the 2003 Pan American Games, and his first national championship in 2004.

For Kellner, making the Olympic team

reflects the eagerness of a younger generation that is following closely in the footsteps of those before them.

"My friends who have done it before say it's an experience that will change your life," he said in an interview with the New Jersey Jewish News.

At the opening ceremonies, "I plan to heed their advice and walk slowly — you only get once around the track," he said.

In other sports, though, veteran Jewish athletes will be representing the U.S.

In track and field, Deena Drossin Kastor, who competed in Sydney and still runs at home in central California, qualified in the marathon; equestrian — and West Palm Beach, Fla., horse trainer — Margie Engle, who was a member of the 2000 U.S. Olympic team, and the winner of five major equestrian competitions in 2001, will also compete.

Rami Zur, a newcomer to the American team who rowed in the canoe/kayak competition for Israel in 2000, will compete this year for the U.S.

His dual citizenship — he was born in Berkeley, Calif., and currently lives outside San Diego — allowed him to qualify for both countries' teams.

In the non-Jewish world, Olympic medals are considered a pinnacle for sports achievement.

But Maccabi USA's Margolis good-naturedly called the international competition a stepping stone for the Maccabiah Games, which will take place in July 2005.

"The Olympics are our stepping stone," he said. "You can win gold medals, but being part of the Jewish people is very special also."

(JTA correspondent Tom Tugend in Los Angeles contributed to this report.)

Lenny Krayzelburg, the hunky Jewish swimmer who won three golds in Sydney, is back for more.

## THIS WEEK

### SUNDAY

■ The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education opens its 29th annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education at Long Island's Hofstra University. The conference, which runs through Aug. 19, will focus on the themes of listening and learning and will include lectures, workshops, concerts, performances and storytelling. Approximately 1,500 people are expected to attend.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Sharon under threat

Ariel Sharon's top aide said the Israeli prime minister faces mounting assassination threats. Sharon's chief of staff, Dov Weisglass, made the comments to Israel's Channel Two television Saturday. Weisglass was alluding to recent Shin Bet warnings that far-right Jews could try to kill Sharon in a bid to stymie his plan to remove Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

### Israeli Arabs rally for Al-Aksa

Thousands of Israeli Arabs rallied at the Al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem, demanding that Israel protect the Muslim shrine.

"The rocket that, God forbid, strikes Al-Aksa, will not just strike Al-Aksa but will bring a catastrophe on the whole region," Sheik Kamal Khatib, deputy head of the Islamic Movement in Israel, told some 20,000 demonstrators who gathered at the Jerusalem holy site Saturday.

He was referring to recent Shin Bet warnings that far-right Jews could target the mosque, located on the Temple Mount, in an attempt to usher in the messianic era.

### Dimona residents protected

Israelis living near the Dimona atomic reactor were issued pills to protect them in case of exposure to nuclear material.

Israeli authorities played down Sunday's distribution by the Home Front Command of iodine tablets to residents of Dimona and other Negev desert communities, saying it was a precaution and that there was no immediate risk of radioactive leaks from the reactor. Environmental groups have challenged the government to open up the books on the Dimona reactor to prove that toxic waste is disposed of safely at the site.

The government has assured the public that the reactor abides by every necessary safety standard.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Funds for Israel advocacy

The North American Jewish federation system has received \$1.7 million for Israel advocacy efforts.

The United Jewish Communities and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs received a grant from UJC's Israel Emergency Campaign to continue their joint Israel Advocacy Initiative, launched last year.

The program gives Jewish federations and community relations councils tools for community campaigns for government and public support for Israel.

The two-year grant follows a \$1 million grant for the program last year that helped train more than 1,000 American activists, brought expert advocates to communities and supported a program that brings North American radio talk show hosts to Israel for a week of broadcasts.

### More than color war

The Maccabi Games got under way in two more cities in North America.

On Sunday, the games in Washington and Columbus, Ohio, began, adding to the competitions that began Aug. 1 in Austin, Texas. The Boston Games begin Aug. 15. Thousands of Jewish athletes aged 13-16 are competing in the annual Games.

### Neo-Nazi had Orthodox landlord

A neo-Nazi accused of a murder last week in Pittsburgh had an elderly Orthodox Jew and Holocaust survivor as his landlord. Elias

Lazar, 91, said he had no idea that Hardy Lloyd was a member of the Creativity Movement, formerly known as the World Church of the Creator, newspapers in Pittsburgh reported. Lloyd, 26, is accused of shooting Lori Hann on Aug. 3.

### Hate tapes kept out of Canada

Canadian officials prevented a cassette tape featuring a speech by a late American white supremacist from coming into the country.

The move was made on grounds that the recording, made by William Pierce, constitutes hate literature.

On the tape, which features a speech recorded in February 2002, Pierce alleges that CanWest Global Communications, the media conglomerate owned by a leading Canadian Jewish family, is part of a Jewish conspiracy to control the media and that the family, the Aspers, exerted "monopoly Jewish control of the Canadian mass media."

### Berlin Olympics boycotter dies

Milton Green, a Jewish hurdler who boycotted the 1936 Berlin Olympics, died Aug. 4 at 92.

Green tied world records in both the 45- and the 60-meter hurdles in the mid-1930s.

In 1936, at the urging of his rabbi, Green, who was considered a shoo-in for a slot on the U.S. Olympic team, boycotted the Berlin Games to protest Hitler and the Nazi regime. In 1997, Green was inducted into the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in Netanya.

## WORLD

### Sudan claims rebels linked to Israel

Sudan said a rebel African group in the Darfur region has ties with Israel.

The foreign minister of the Islamist government in Khartoum said on Sunday that several leaders of the Justice and Equality Movement had bolted because others among the group's chiefs were making frequent visits to Israel.

Mustafa Osman Ismail, who was in Cairo seeking Arab support for his government, said the breakaway leaders "confirmed that the leadership of the movement make regular visits to Israel."

A spokesman for the movement denied the allegation, casting it as an attempt to stir up Muslim sentiment.

### Britain: Zionist group no charity

Britain is removing a Jewish group from its list of officially sanctioned charities. In making the move, the Charity Commission of England and Wales said Betar-Tagar, a right-leaning Zionist group, was a political organization and not a charity.

The commission also said the group had not filed a financial statement since 1999 despite repeated requests.

The move strips the group of non-profit status. The group said the move was a result of pressure from Muslim groups.

### Russian-born Israeli killed near Moscow

A man believed to be the only Russian-born Israeli ever extradited from Israel to Russia was shot and killed.

Andrei Zhuravlev, who was also known by his underworld nickname Terrasini, was killed Thursday near his house in a village near Moscow, likely by members of a rival criminal gang, police said. Zhuravlev was widely regarded as one of the leading figures in Moscow criminal circles.

He was suspected of multiple crimes including killings. Facing criminal prosecution in Russia, he fled to Israel in 1999 where he converted to Judaism and became an Israeli citizen.